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LETTER DATED 29 SEPTEMBER 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On behalf of my Government, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the letter dated 17 September 1992, addressed to you by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Solomon Islands (S/24572) on behalf of his Government.

As you are aware, my Government has already acted to address the issues raised in the letter.

The situation on Bougainville Island in Papua New Guinea's North Solomons Province, which has given rise to certain difficulties on the border with Solomon Islands, is an internal affair of Papua New Guinea.

As a law-abiding Member of the United Nations, the Government of Papua New Guinea has always sought to act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It has done so, and will continue to do so, in the present instance.

The Government of Papua New Guinea believes that the issues raised in the letter from the Government of Solomon Islands can be best resolved on a bilateral basis.

Because of concern with the situation which has developed in the North Solomons Province, in particular since 1988, the Government of Papua New Guinea took steps immediately after coming to office in July this year to review the situation in the Province, including government policy and procedures.

The Government of Papua New Guinea believes that the changes made, and those under consideration should help to ensure that difficulties of the kind recently experienced on the border with Solomon Islands will not be repeated.

The Government of Papua New Guinea looks to the Government of Solomon Islands for cooperation.

The Government of Papua New Guinea has publicly acknowledged that members of the Papua New Guinea security forces have crossed without authorization into Solomon Islands and engaged in unauthorized activities there.

The Government has ordered an investigation of the actions taken by certain members of the security forces, offered its apologies, sought to remedy those actions which can be corrected, offered compensation and taken steps to discipline those members of the security forces who were involved.

Consistent with the principles and procedures set out in the Charter, the Government of Papua New Guinea has communicated directly with the Government of Solomon Islands concerning the above, and requested a meeting at the Foreign Minister level at the earliest opportunity.

As an immediate neighbour of Solomon Islands and a fellow member of the United Nations, the South Pacific Forum and the Melanesian Spearhead Group, the Government of Papua New Guinea is committed to the maintenance of close and cordial relations with the people and Government of Solomon Islands and for mutual respect and benefit.

The Government of Papua New Guinea has, therefore, proposed that the two Governments enter into a formal agreement to avert any repetition of recent unfortunate events, to strengthen bilateral relations and to formalize arrangements for mutual consultation.

I should appreciate it if you could circulate this letter together with the following attachments as a document of the Security Council - the copy of the letter dated 21 September 1992 from the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Rt. Hon. Paias Wingti, CMG, MP, addressed to the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, the Hon. Solomon Mamaloni, MP; and the copy of a press release by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea dated 20 September 1992.

(Signed) Renagi R. LOHIA, OBE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

Letter dated 21 September 1992 from the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea addressed to the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands

Further to my response to your written communication faxed to me on Friday, 18 September 1992 in reply to our earlier telephone conversation, I wish again to express my sincere and personal gratitude for the effort that you have been making to bring about an amicable solution to the problems resulting from the raid on Shortland Islands by members of the Papua New Guinea security forces.

I am deeply grateful for your stated desire for an early dialogue to be encouraged, which I wish to assure you is similar to the position I and my Cabinet hold.

Following a meeting of my Cabinet today, I would like personally to inform you of the decisions we have now instigated, which will be confirmed through formal diplomatic communications taking into consideration the four requests sought in your Government's protest note issued last Tuesday, 15 September 1992.

The decisions taken are:

(a) Disciplinary and appropriate actions will be instigated against those involved in the border incursion;

(b) The Papua New Guinea Government will accept all liabilities including compensation for the families of the deceased Solomon Islands citizens after consultations with the Government of Solomon Islands;

(c) The Foreign Minister, the Hon. John Kaputin, is to meet with the Solomon Islands counterpart and other Solomon Islands leaders as soon as practicable and thereafter to report to the Papua New Guinea Government for a formal position to be taken in respect to the Solomon Islands protest note.

I have publicly admitted that members of the Papua New Guinea security forces actually raided a village in the Shortland Islands. The text of this apology will be incorporated in the Papua New Guinea note verbale.

Yesterday, I issued a press statement confirming the actions to be taken by my Government including a proposal that I believe will provide a formal basis to guide future relations between our two countries.

I am concerned that the previous Governments of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands have taken for granted the importance of relations between our two countries.

In redressing this unfortunate situation, it is my conviction that a formal bilateral agreement, in treaty form, which gives due and proper recognition to relations and to the varied interests that our two countries share, be concluded. Existing bilateral understandings and arrangements can be sought under the treaty once it is in place.

For this reason, I have asked my Foreign Affairs Minister to discuss this proposal further with Minister Tausinga as soon as it is convenient for them to do so.

I do hope that you will endorse this proposal so that our two Governments can proceed to negotiate and have the agreement ready for our signatures in the near future.

In reaffirming my commitment to maintaining personal dialogue with you, I wish to inform you in confidence that your request to have our present High Commissioner replaced has been addressed by my Foreign Minister, the Hon. Kaputin, who will shortly intimate to Minister Tusinga the replacement as well as agreement from your Government.

Again, allow me to restate my deep appreciation for your decision to maintain personal links with me and I wish to assure you that I will do my utmost to ensure that we resolve our problems through mutually agreed decisions.

(Signed) Paias WINGTI, CMG, MP

Annex II

Press release dated 20 September 1992 by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Paias Wingti, CMG, MP, confirmed that he had personal interactions with his Solomon Islands counterpart since Friday over the border incursion into Solomon Islands territory on 12 September 1992.

Prime Minister Wingti said "his discussions with Prime Minister Mamaloni reaffirmed their commitment to maintain personal dialogue through which issues affecting relations between Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands could be resolved".

"Since our understanding to maintain personal contact following our Melanesian Spearhead Group meeting in Vila in July and subsequently the issuance of the Vila statement, I intend to maintain these links with my Solomon Islands counterpart to ensure that we give the appropriate and necessary political directions in resolving problems and issues that affect our two countries", he said.

Prime Minister Wingti also said his discussions with Prime Minister Mamaloni were a result of his Cabinet's consideration and decision effectively to respond and deal with the border incursion taking into account the protest issued by the Solomon Islands Government.

He confirmed that Cabinet has decided to take the following measures. These included:

(a) Disciplinary and appropriate legal proceedings against those involved in the border incursion;

(b) That the Government agree to pay compensation to the families of the deceased Solomon Islands citizens;

(c) The Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon. John Kaputin, was to meet his counterpart as soon as practicable.

These responses were a result of a Cabinet submission prepared by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in response to the four requests sought in the protest note issued by the Solomon Islands Government on Tuesday, 15 September 1992.

The Prime Minister confirmed that the Government will formally reply to the Solomon Islands protest note, and along with the decisions taken above by Cabinet, will make an apology over the border incident as well as assure the Solomon Islands Government that no further illegal border crossings will take place.

He added that, as a result of his personal interactions so far with Prime Minister Mamaloni, both Governments would now move forward to implement an effective solution towards resolving the border incident.

The Prime Minister further added that "he will propose to his Solomon Islands counterpart that a formal bilateral agreement which will give due and proper recognition to relations and to the varied interests that both Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands share as the basis on which future relations can be guided.

This proposal will be a major foreign policy initiative that Minister Kaputin will take up further with his Solomon Islands counterpart.

> "It is apparent that border incidents including the recent incursion into Solomon Islands territory by our security forces is a reflection of the way previous Governments and by extension government agencies have taken for granted our relations with Solomon Islands."
>
> "This attitude, I believe, has contributed to the disregard and subsequent illegal actions taken by our security forces in dealing with the spillover effects of the Bougainville crisis."

I am confident that this Government will rectify this anomaly by proposing this formal agreement which will be binding on both countries.